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INFO RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001264

SIPDIS

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DOE FOR GPERSON, CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE ALSO FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII,
DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/07/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: THE NIGER DELTA -- A WARY LULL?

REF: A. LAGOS 1263

[1](#)B. LAGOS 1254

[1](#)C. LAGOS 1249

Classified By: Consul General Brian Browne; Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: After four incidents in Delta State, and one in Akwa Ibom earlier in the week, there have been no militant attacks since October 4. Shell has lost 9,000 barrels per day of oil from the Ekaluma flow station in Rivers State following the October 4 attack. There have been unconfirmed reports that Joint Task Force (JTF) troops are massing on Onne and Bonny Islands, but we do not know whether this deployment is defensive in nature or a prelude to a more assertive posture. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) October 5 declared a unilateral cease-fire, but said it would watch the actions of the military and act accordingly. This past week has had two chapters. Several days of intense encounters have been followed by several days of tense quiet. What has been missing in this tale, however, is a sign of dialogue between the Government of Nigeria (GON) and the Ijaws. End Summary.

The Week in Capsule

[1](#)2. (C) On October 2, the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), composed of the Niger Delta Emancipation Front (NDPEF), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and the Martyrs Brigade (TMB), attacked the barge convoy of a Shell contractor near Bille Creek, killing five (5) Joint Task Force (JTF) soldiers. The contractor's twenty-five employees, earlier reported missing, have been released. Also on October 2, militants attacked a Shell barge near the Sambreiro River, killing four Nigerians. On October 3, in Akwa Ibom State, seven expatriate employees of ExxonMobil contractors were abducted from a residential compound near Eket. The expatriates remain in captivity. Credible proof

of life for all seven has been received.

¶3. (C) On October 4, in Rivers State, militants attacked a houseboat near Ekaluma, reportedly killing nine (9) JTF soldiers. That same day, Shell closed the Ekaluma flow station due to damage to facility pipelines caused by the firefight. Evidently stray fire from a GON helicopter gun ship strafed the pipeline. Shell's Olav Lijosne (protect) confirmed that the move reduces Shell's output by 9,000 barrels per day. Lijosne declined to predict when repairs on the flow station could be completed, noting that the company has suspended travel by Shell personnel in the creeks. Also on October 4, approximately 50 miles west of the state capital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, militants attacked an Agip boat, killing one Nigerian employee of the Agip contractor.

¶4. (U) On October 5, MEND alleged that troops from the military's Joint Task Force (JTF) razed Elemtombia community in Rivers State during a retaliatory raid. MEND also claimed it killed seventeen soldiers on October 4, a claim the military denied. In an October 6 statement, MEND declared a unilateral cease-fire, but announced it would continue to watch the actions of the military and act accordingly. MEND also boasted that it has brought several hundred Ijaw militants into Rivers State as reinforcements against a possible JTF offensive.

¶5. (C) Consulate officers have received reports of large numbers of JTF troops gathering on Bonny and Onne Islands in Rivers State. We do not know whether this concentration of troops is defensive or otherwise in character. Currently, JTF is not sending out patrols in the affected areas of River State, which is a sign that they do not want to provoke

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further incidents. Although there have been no reports of peace talks between the rebels and the military, President Obasanjo reportedly met October 5 with the chiefs of the armed services and defense intelligence agencies to insist that they exercise restraint during the current crisis.

¶6. (C) Comment: According to news reports and our own informal tally, fourteen or more JTF and have been killed by militants during the week. This is a higher number of military deaths than we have seen in similar incidents earlier this year, and could, we fear, trigger retaliatory measures by the military. We have been unable to determine whether the increased military presence on Bonny and Onne Islands is an attempt to defuse tensions by reducing the military presence in the creeks, or is in preparation for a more aggressive deployment of troops against the militants. Although the past few days have been quiet, the area remains tense and the likelihood of incidents in the near future is high.
BROWNE